



Richard G Portis

April 15, 1944 - October 8, 2025

RICHARD G. PORTIS

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Richard G. Portis was born on April 15, 1944, in Glen Hazel, Pennsylvania. A graduate of Gladstone High School where he was active on the football and basketball teams. He continued his education at Point Park University where he was a champion played basketball before serving his country in Vietnam as a member of the United States Army. Richard G. Portis served as a Sergeant E-5 Administration Specialist in the U.S. Army from 1965-1968, receiving an Honorable Discharge and earning the National Defense Service Medal and Vietnam Service Medal with two Bronze Service Stars.

Upon discharge and returning home, Richard's deep commitment to community uplift led him to become a pioneering organizer. He was appointed to establish the first Opportunities Industrialization Center (OIC) program in Western Pennsylvania, headquartered in McKeesport. His exceptional leadership in building this groundbreaking program earned national recognition and widespread respect.

Recognized for his talents, Richard was appointed by Rev. Dr. Leon Sullivan, founder of OIC, to lead the Miami Dade OIC in Florida where he also served the community in many capacities. Returning to Pittsburgh, he introduced the concept of the African American Chamber of Commerce and held the first

organizing meetings, he was active with the Pittsburgh NAACP, was a member of the organizing body for “The Plan for Progress” which led to the hosting of the National NAACP Convention in the City of Pittsburgh.

A visionary for economic empowerment, Richard established the highly successful Veteran Entrepreneurship Program at Robert Morris University, where he served as Executive Director for two decades assisting more than five hundred veterans establish or grow their business. Under his guidance, the program earned national acclaim for its service to veterans across the country.

Following his retirement from Robert Morris University, Richard continued to make an impact through his consulting firm, 21st Century Industries, and as an associate with LegalShield, and assisting his sister, Connie with her business Renaissance Publications.

A lifelong member of Park Place AME Church, Richard was a founding leader of Park Place Ministries and The Legacy Fund, President of the Lay Organization, and organizer of the church’s annual Veterans Memorial Observance. He served faithfully in other capacities, always with humility and purpose. Recognized on the courts of Pittsburgh, Richard was an avid tennis player and competed in many community tournaments.

Known for his warm and affable nature, Richard was a cherished brother, son, uncle, and a loyal friend to many. He was always ready with wise counsel, encouragement, or a helping hand. Though he received numerous awards and honors throughout his life, he often said his greatest title was being his mother’s “favorite son.”

In his later years, while facing dementia, Richard remained vibrant in spirit. Residing at the Heinz Veterans Hospital in Aspinwall, Pennsylvania, he was affectionately known as for his sharp style, sense of humor, and engaging personality.

Richard’s legacy endures through the countless lives he touched—with his leadership, generosity, faith, and humor. He was preceded in death by son James, brothers Reginald and Alexander Portis, his mother Martha Freeman

Portis and father Alexander Portis, and several dearly loved nephews and friends. He is survived by his sisters Priscilla Burgess, Marsha Mozley Wheeler, and Constance Portis, as well as nieces and nephews who all carry forward the lessons and love “Uncle Richard” shared so freely. In addition, the family is grateful for Richard’s lifelong friendship with George “Sluggo” Hollis. Richard G. Portis will be remembered as a willing servant, loyal friend, and humble mentor whose life exemplifies faith, perseverance, and community service. The family is grateful for the outpouring of love and support.

In lieu of flowers, contributions may be to:

Park Place Ministries
315 East 10th Avenue
Homestead, PA 15120

Or in support of Veterans Programs

RGP VETS
POISE Foundation
603 Stanwix St. Ste1700
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

(Newly established to support programs that support the wellbeing of veterans.)

Previous Events

Visitation

OCT 15. 11:00 AM - 7:00 PM (ET)

Bethel AME Church
2720 Webster Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15219

Service

OCT 16. 11:00 AM - 12:30 PM (ET)

Bethel AME Church
2720 Webster Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15219

Interment

OCT 16 (ET)

National Cemetery of the Alleghenies
1158 Morgan Rd.
Bridgeville, PA 15017

Interment will be private, Military Honors will be conducted at the Church

Tribute Wall

DO

“ *What great company Richard was. Smart, witty, great ideas and a charming smile. Even in some down times he'd overcome the with his courage and determination.*

I am proud to have called Richard a friend and truly mourn his loss.

I only have just heard of Richards passing. My condolences to Richard's family and especially to his terrific sister, Connie.

Peace be with you all.

*Doug Shields
President Emeritus,
Pittsburgh City Council (2004-2012)*

Douglas - December 14, 2025 at 11:25 AM

VB

“ *I always enjoyed running into Richard
I will miss him
See you later Richard
Blessings to the family
Valeria 🙏*

valeria Williams Bullock - November 17, 2025 at 10:36 PM

CH

“ *My condolences go out to the Portis family. I met Richard many years ago on the tennis courts. Great guy. I always enjoyed the many conversations we had. He'll be missed.*

Cordell Harris

Cordell Harris - October 23, 2025 at 01:28 PM

AG

“ To the of Richard G. Portis,
I was blessed to have connected with Richard while we were teenagers. We shared a relationship that allowed me to meet his beautiful family and see the love first hand he had for his family. Our life journeys separated us for over 30 years, but when we reconnected, it was like it had been only a few months. I am so grateful that it was in God's plan for us to reconnect and share time with each other once again. My heart is heavy as I know your hearts are heavy, but even though we cannot talk with him, hug him and tell him we love him, all we have to do is look to the heavens and look for the brightest star and know he is shining down on us. With love and prayers. *Alfreeda Smith Goff*

Alfreeda Smith Goff - October 16, 2025 at 12:14 PM

VB

Seeing Richard always brightened my day
He was a joy
Valeria

valeria Williams Bullock - October 16, 2025 at 09:47 PM



“ Richard was always bright light. Striving to support the community and the people he so loved 😊. I shall never forget him. He gave me my first “real job.” Always treated me with respect and encouragement. You shall never be forgotten 🌸



Jaye Hicks - October 16, 2025 at 11:47 AM

KA

“ Kevin and Lamonte Amos purchased the Country Basket Blooms for the family of Richard G Portis.



Kevin and Lamonte Amos - October 16, 2025 at 07:07 AM

KA

“ Kevin and Lamonte Amos planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Richard G Portis.

Kevin and Lamonte Amos - October 16, 2025 at 07:07 AM

LS

“ Lynne Swan lit a candle in memory of Richard G Portis



Lynne Swan - October 15, 2025 at 07:46 PM

KB

“ My dad's best friend, may you rest in eternal peace 🙏



Katrina Betsill - October 15, 2025 at 01:26 PM

MB

“ *Marie T Brown lit a candle in memory of
Richard G Portis*



Marie T Brown - October 15, 2025 at 01:18 PM

SD

“ *Sherri Daniels lit a candle in memory of
Richard G Portis*



Sherri Daniels - October 15, 2025 at 12:47 PM

RS

“ Connie & Family,
Sorry to hear about Richard passing. First and foremost, I want you and family to know I'm extremely honored that you wanted me to be part of Richard's eulogy. However, like Richard I'm struggling with issues related to my age and Service to our country. Therefore, let me reinforce Family & friend's that character is built first by Family and is the foundation for Military Service. Richard and I have several things in common. First, we both served our country in the 60's. Vietnam 1968 for me. Richard and I seldom talked about our time in country or the tensions during that time. Another thing we had in common was "Style". Always dressed for the occasion! Regardless of the situation we shared our passion for Veterans! Always helping Vets and each other's passion! VETaxi (2010) Veterans Transportation Mgt a certified VOSB. I could go on & on about the fun times we shared! Feel free to share with family & friends.
Rest in Peace my Brother...Welcome Home!🇺🇸

Robert C. DeLucia Sr. - October 15, 2025 at 12:07 PM

SA

To the family of Richard you have my heartfelt sympathy. Richard was such a nice guy. Loved by many always upbeat always acknowledging friends from the past. You will be missed and your legacy will be remembered. Rest in peace.
God bless you all.
Stephanie (Jones) Akers

Stephanie Akers - October 15, 2025 at 07:51 PM

RB

“ To Connie Portis and family, we extend our prayers and sympathy to you. We enjoyed working with you and Richard over the years. The Bynum family and our church family will keep you in our prayers. His energy and business sense will never be forgotten. God Bless -
Russell & Kathy Bynum

Russell Bynum - October 14, 2025 at 05:01 PM

DH

“ I returned to Pititsburgh, I heard somebody call my name at Staples Office Supply and it was Richard. From the moment on we kept in contact and I had the opportunity to visit with him at his apartment and several times at the VA. He will be truly missed.

Donna Humphries - October 14, 2025 at 12:02 PM

AF

“ Aldrich/Godfrey Family! purchased the Blue Carib bean Bouquet for the family of Richard G Portis.



Aldrich/Godfrey Family! - October 11, 2025 at 10:13 PM

RD

“ Robert DeLucia purchased the Peaceful White Lilies Basket for the family of Richard G Portis.



Robert DeLucia - October 11, 2025 at 08:05 PM

MW

“ Hello to Priscilla, Marsha, and Connie.
Condolences from Mary Portis in Miami.



Mary Wright - October 10, 2025 at 05:02 PM

DS

“ Damon S. purchased the Full Of Love Bouquet for the family of Richard G Portis.



Damon S. - October 10, 2025 at 02:59 PM

DS

“ Damon S. planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Richard G Portis.

Damon S. - October 10, 2025 at 02:59 PM

DM

“ Danielle M. purchased the Arrive in Style for the family of Richard G Portis.



Danielle M. - October 10, 2025 at 02:11 PM

RW

“ My condolences 🙏 GLEN HAZEL FOREVER

Richard Washington - October 09, 2025 at 10:08 AM

JH

Skinny brown/wire man..my uncles best friend for life..love u dude

Joel Hollis - October 18, 2025 at 10:50 PM

KR

“ *Kenneth Reynolds lit a candle in memory of
Richard G Portis*



Kenneth Reynolds - October 08, 2025 at 09:00 PM

YD

Always and forever my friend. Love you ,Vonnie

Yvonne Durham - October 13, 2025 at 11:06 PM